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LETTER
OF THE
LIBRARIAN OF HARVARD COLLEGE,
TO
THE COMMITTEE
OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF THE ALUMNI
APPOINTED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION
THE STATE OF THE COLLEGE LIBRARY,
IN ACCORDANCE WITH A VOTE OF THE ASSOCIATION PASSED
AT THE ANNUAL MEETING,
JULY 16, 1857.

CAMBRIDGE:
METCALF AND COMPANY,
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.
1859.

Donations of books, pamphlets, or manuscripts for the public library of Harvard College, may be sent directly to the library, or may be left with either of the following gentlemen : —

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LETTER.

*Harvard College Library,
Cambridge, Mass., June 7th, 1858.*

HON. THOMAS G. CARY.

DEAR SIR:—

As several of the college officers will probably send you details in relation to the wants of their respective departments, it may not be necessary for me to do more than make general statements. The reputation of the college and of the country, and the good of the community, appeal powerfully to the friends of the university to furnish at least the materials and tools for making the standard of education the highest and best on the continent. To meet [the pressing demands upon the library of the college for the moral and intellectual culture of more than seven hundred students from all parts of the country, who are constantly going forth to take prominent positions in society,] the first object should be to provide, as far as practicable, the modern works in the different departments, as fast as they are published. And with nothing less than this ought the friends of the college to rest satisfied.

If it were possible, it would be desirable to go further. Various departments are deficient in rare old books and pamphlets, which are as important to thorough students as the modern. The library is not more used for reading than it is for literary, genealogical, historical, statistical, philological, philosophical, scientific, and other investigations. It is the

obliged to resort to the literary treasures which his bounty had been the means of amassing, and which would give to the library celebrity, and make it a beacon to all literary and scientific men on the continent.

I might extend my remarks to other important topics. There is so much to be said, that it is difficult to determine where to begin and when to end. I would not overlook the enlightened munificence which has from time to time placed in our alcoves very rare and costly books and collections. There is an excellent foundation to build upon ; but unless new works are added, the library, however valuable in any past time, must cease to command respect, and to exert the influence which it ought upon the university and the country. If the views which I have advanced exceed what by some persons are considered reasonable anticipations, I hope no one will be deterred from contributing whatever his inclinations and abilities may prompt, however small it may be, and however unimportant it may seem, remembering that not a book or pamphlet has ever been printed, of which it is not desirable to have one copy in the library.

I have the honor to be, respectfully, yours,

JOHN LANGDON SIBLEY, *Librarian.*